



TALES FROM THE SWAMP

January 2024

Editor: Kevan Nason, N4XL

Thank you to our group leadership:

President – Ed, K3DNE

Vice President - Dave, WN4AFP

Treasurer – Scott, KG9V

Secretary – Kevan, N4XL

Web Master – Frank, KG4IGC

SFCG Webpage: swampfoxcontestgroup.com

Welcome Back Ron N4VZ



I'm pleased to introduce (actually reintroduce) Ron N4VZ to the Swamp Fox Contest Group! Ron was one of, if not the first, non-officer members of SFCG back in 2014. Ron holds an Extra class ticket, previously held the call KG4NOZ and he and XYL Kate K4ZVT live in Loris. Ron states that he dropped away a few years ago because he spent his winters in Asia and had other commitments. He recently reset his shack to prepare for this winter's contests. He's now able to operate remotely when at his QTH in Asia. His QRZ.com page shows a photo of a very neat shack consisting of FLEX-6500, Kenwood TS-590 and Icom IC-7100 and Ameritron AL-811H. Also pictured is a DXE Hexx beam on what appears to be 50 feet of Rohn 25G. He also has a 100 Meter Dipole and EggBeaters for 2M and 440Mhz for satellite operation. Ron operates all contest modes but

enjoys digital modes the most. Ron: Welcome to the Swamp Fox Contest Group!

73,
Ed K3DNE

Editor: Ron was the first non-officer member of the SFCG. Checkout a picture of Ron and Kate K4VZT's great shack on QRZ.com. It's impressive. I wonder if he can make that keyboard dance during the CW contests? Ron, I'm told by Dave NJ4F the SFCG has changed significantly over the years. Please speak up anytime and share some of your smarts.

Welcome Andy AA5JF



Please welcome Andy AA5JF to the Swamp Fox Contest Group! Andy was recruited by WN4AFP and other SFCG members. Andy's QTH is in Augusta and his station (I think, I had to do some digging to get this info - he may need to let us know of changes and what he uses on VHF-UHF) consists of a TS-590SG, Ameritron AL-800 amp, a HY-Gain TH3 at 30', 40m Dipole at 36' and an Inverted-L for 160/80m. He holds an Extra ticket, has been continuously licensed since 1987 and is currently active on 160 - 2M + 70cm. He's a faculty advisor for the Augusta University Amateur Radio Club, WA4AUG. His preferred contest mode is "mostly" CW and he enjoys NAQP's, ARRL 10m, SS, June VHF contest, state QSO parties and sprints. He has also multi-op'd with other SFCG members at the W7WZ contest station in Fort Mill, SC in the CQWW CW DX contest. He's also a

member of the South East Contest Club. Outside of contesting, Andy is very active in POTA and IOTA activities and activations. Last May he op'd from Sunset Beach Island NC (IOTA NA-112 and POTA K-3850). He also holds 5BWAZ-9BDXCC-300IOTA-VUCC50MHZ(636)-5BWAS-WAJA-PACC!

Andy: Welcome to the Swamp Fox Contest Group!

73
Ed K3DNE

Contest Tips:

- Even if you don't use N1MM, there is some information about how different Telnet clusters handle spots and pass along self-spots from people in the N1MM section below that might be of use to you whatever logger you are using.
- Sometimes using terms in their primary language or that are used in the geographical area of the DX operator helps get exchange information through. Although standard phonetics is usually best, it helps to know what cities are in the area. Instead of "Sierra", South Americans readily recognize "Santiago". Instead of Tango, Japanese recognize "Tokoyo". Many times, I've found using numbers in their first language helps too. I periodically review the chart below. Japanese has different words for the same number. I list both to satisfy those people who insist my Karate instructor used the wrong words while shouting in the Dojo as we threw thousands of repetitive punches and kicks. Despite their insistence, it's been my on-the-air experience that Shi and Shichi work just fine when talking to actual Japanese hams.

English	Spanish	Japanese	German
1	Uno	ichi	eins
2	Dos	Ni	zwei
3	Tres	san	drei
4	Cuatro	shi/yon	vier
5	Cinco	Go	funf
6	Seis	roku	sechs
7	Siete	shichi/nana	sieben
8	Ocho	Hachi	acht
9	Nueve	kyuu	neun
0	Cero	juu	null

Contest Tips From Past Newsletters

K1AR Contest Tips

34 Log checkers will usually tell you that incorrectly copied call signs is the most common mistake in contest logs. When CQing and running other stations, always repeat the call sign of the other station you are working. Even though you may be absolutely certain that you copied the call sign correctly, a repeat of the call will allow the other station to correct any possible mistakes. It's worth the time!

36 What happens when you drink coffee? You have a hard time sleeping, right? Have you ever wondered why you have trouble getting a "quality" nap the afternoon before a 48 hour contest? For me it's that morning coffee. After I stopped the Friday habit, I was able to physically prepare for the contest in a much improved way. Save the coffee for 0000Z that evening - - you'll be amazed at the results!

54 Do you suffer from a perpetual lack of organization? If so, you're like most of us. A tip learned from one of my contesting mentors, Jim Lawson, W2PV, is to document your station. Do you know what size wrenches you need when you go up the tower next time? What are the resistance readings of your rotator between pins? How is that 4 over 4 relay box constructed? The list goes on, yet a little attention to administrivia will go a long way to make you a better contester (tnx W1WEF and YCCC Scuttlebutt).

Annual Meeting

SFCG's annual meeting will be held on **Sunday, January 28'th at the Lizard's Thicket in Lexington SC at 2PM**. 2PM is the earliest weekend time they had available (last year we met at 3PM and couldn't get into the room till 3:30) where they can *partially* guarantee that the banquet room will be available for a private event (apparently business is booming and they use that room as a regular dining room on weekends). I pushed and attempted to negotiate with the regional manager to move it from 3PM to 2PM and she reluctantly agreed but can't guarantee that all previous customers will have finished and be out of the room by 2PM - last year we had to wait

about 1/2 hour for the room to clear and be re-arranged for our meeting. Also last year, I let timing get away and due to driving distances, some had to leave during the primary presentation (Sorry Matt). This year I'll be sure to keep to a better timing schedule.

Spouse or a guest are welcome. If you know of a potential member please feel free to invite that person as a guest.

The Lizard's Thicket is located on US-1 between I-26 and I-20 west of I-26 in Lexington SC (see address and phone # below). There are many Lizard's Thickets in SC - I went to the wrong one in 2020 and was late to the meeting!

Lizard's Thicket
4616 Augusta Rd.
Lexington, SC
803-785-5560

In addition to the usual business meeting, SFOTA award presentations, lunch (order off the menu and pay individually), there will be a presentation by Bill N4IQ: "Wired Fun at N4iQ". Bill will offer an overview of his station, wire antenna system and how he's made that work successfully both in contesting and obtaining DXCC Honor Roll.

I'm sure that Covid and its variants (and the flu, RSV or other infectious calamities) remain on everyone's mind and is a continuing concern. We will monitor and if the pandemic raises its ugly head again to dangerous levels, I will discuss with the club officers to determine if cancellation is prudent and QSY to a Zoom meeting. Attendance is *not* mandatory, so if a member is not comfortable attending due to health concerns, by all means, do not attend. This is a personal decision and will be left to the individual member.

Minutes will be posted on our website as soon as available.

Looking forward to seeing you there!

73,

Ed K3DNE
President, Swamp Fox Contest Group

From the Reflector:

- Bob KZ3P made 3 contacts in the OK DX RTTY contest. Before you shrug and move on there's reason to be happy about that. He wrote: "Truly a pitiful showing, but it took a long time to figure it out on my radio. Only 3 contacts, but the important part is that I now know how to do RTTY on my radio. Looking forward to the next contest." Several SFCG members shared some thoughts with Bob about using his TS890 for RTTY.
- Ed K3DNE is feeling the need to head north and up his game. The post title is "Not to early to start planning: Dayton CTU"
- Dave wrote that the 2023 SFOTA season is closed. I hope you are heading to the SFCG annual meeting on the 28th and here him summarize the standings and hand out some plaques.

- Bill N4IQ wrote about major changes in N1MM's Spectrum Display. If you have given up on it in the past you might revisit that. Several posts were shared concerning about that great N1MM feature.
- John NJ4Z let us know where the Silent Key L.B. Cebik W4RCL's antenna data is kept on the web. <https://www.antenna2.net/cebik/>. John also mentioned he had archived several web pages that interested him as a precaution against losing the information should the website be deactivated.
- Dave NJ4F offered a free iPhone 11 Pro Max phone case. Not radio related, but we appreciated the offer. It's good that SFCG folk try to help each other.
- Several people are having great fun in the CWT. WN4AFP, N4QI, and K2SX to mention some. Dennis K2SX posted an amazing 168 Q's during a single hour's CWT. Great single radio score Dennis.
- Matt NU4E and Bill N4IQ had a photo finish in the 2023 CQWW RTTY contest SOAHP category. Matt edged out Bill with his 1,191,020 points compared to Bill's 1,183,640.
- Frank KG4IGC also entered the 2023 CQWW RTTY and pulled in a 1st place US 4th call area certificate in the SOALP category. Great job Frank!
- Bob KZ3P enjoyed the RAC Winter contest even though he missed the NU province. Get them next year Bob.
- Dave NJ4F was finally able to get some tower and antenna work done. Joining him were Van N4VGE, Dave AA4VT, Scott N2OG, Stan KO4KOQ (new ham), Bob AI4SX (potential new SFCG member), and Ted K7OM (photographer). Dave AA4VT came back a second time and helped with the SteppIR which had issues. Dave NJ4F's ProSisTel rotor isn't working quite right. They weren't able to get the mast into the tower and will have to try later.
- Despite a request by Ed K3DNE and Kevan N4XL no one new stepped up and offered to be a club officer for this year. That is very disappointing.
- Bob AC4MC withdrew from the SFCG after moving to Florida. Hate to see you go Bob. We've enjoyed the interaction.
- Some strong comments were made concerning the upcoming ARRL Boards proposed BL-46 motion concerning the Board's Code of Conduct. Postings were also received from Roanoke Division Director Dr. Boehner N2ZZ and SC Section Manager John NJ4Z.
- Dennis K2SX did an outstanding job raising and coordinating three teams for the NAQP CW. The SFCG placed well. There were many great scores, including some personal best postings. Of special note were the "Over 200K club" members N4XL, K2SX, N4IQ and KY4ID. And we can't forget all those who aren't strong CW operators who joined in. Thank you Ed K3DNE and Scott N2OG to name a couple. Even Kraig AA4SD and Phil NI7R joined in and contributed to the SFCG's overall score. Thank you everyone!

- Frank KG4IGC had a visit from Mr. Murphy during the ARRL RTTY RU. It cost him a few hours. He expressed a thought most of us have had at various times in our lives. "God I hate computers."
- Bill N4IQ didn't RTTY RU issues though. 3830scores has him in 2nd place World in the SOUHP category.
- Ron N4VZ relearned a lesson many of us have forgotten. It pays to make sure the shack is ready for a contest well before start time. Ron wrote about the ARRL RTTY RU: "Felt like a rookie in the beginning. 2 Hours before start I realized I hadn't installed N1MM, MMTTY and 2Tone on the new computer. Luckily, I was able to install and configure for SO2R before the start (only ran 1R this contest). First several Q's I kept answering off freq. Why? I discovered MMTTY defaults to AFC and NET on. Corrected that. After a few Q's Saturday I went to bed with the flu." Hope you're over that flu Ron, and hope Kate didn't catch it.
- Kevan N4XL reported that after a couple years of problems and battles that his microHAM MK2R+ SO2R box finally died.
- Scott KG9V mentioned its Dues time again. Scott gave some info about paying online in post #25901.
- Van N4VGE lost some logged FT8 Q's and asked for help. Did you ever find them Van?
- Kevan N4XL shared a quote from Pete N4ZR about keywords to use in your CQ message that will trigger the RBN to spot you. Turns out you don't even need to use "CQ".
- Dennis K2SX had numerous communications about the NAQP CW before, during, and after the contest. Thank you, sir. You did a great job. Dennis also came up with some great Team names. Not sure I'm impertinent enough to be called a jackanape though. Maybe y'all know something about me I don't?
- Dave WN4AFP shared some info about a new club completion called the State QSO Party Challenge. Information about it is included elsewhere in this newsletter.
- Ed K3DNE and others have reported not everyone is receiving posts from the Groups.io reflector. The problem turned out to be a spam filter service that supplied information to many ISP's. If after today, 1/16/2024, you are still having problems then let him know about it.
- Several of us are now posting after action reports (Lessons Learned) from their contests. They make for interesting reading if you are looking to improve. They also point out things to watch out for, like items not checked pre-contest preparation and potential failure points during the contest.

State QSO Party Challenge

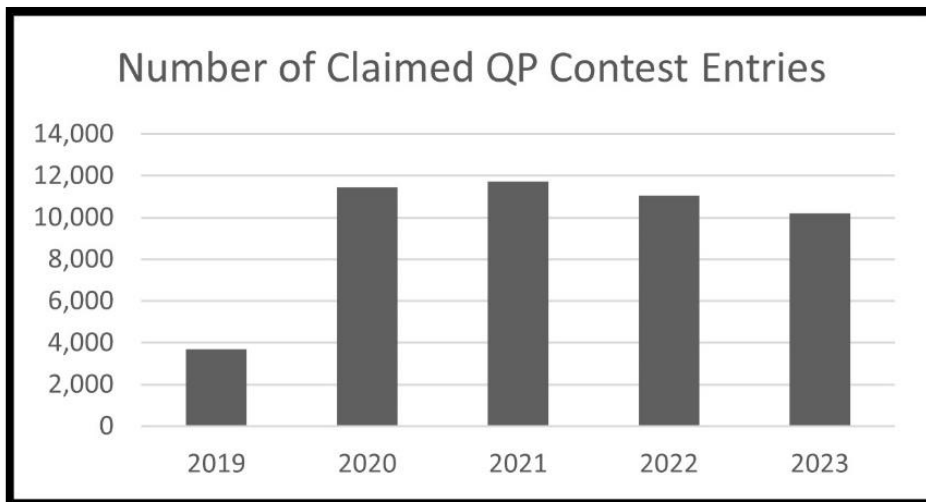
By Dave Edmonds WN4AFP

(Editor's Note: Dave was asked to write this article for the National Contest Journal. It will appear there too. Thank you for sharing it with the SFCG Dave.)

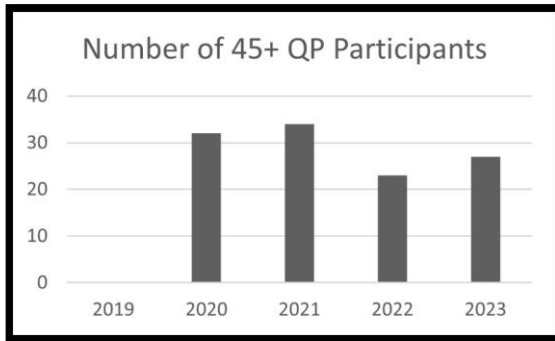
There's a new 'contest season' that has been gaining momentum over the last few years... It's the state QSO party 'contest season' which runs from the first weekend in February through the third weekend in October. During the state QSO party season, you'll have an opportunity to compete in at least one or more of the 47 contests each weekend, with the exception of the 'half-time' break during the month of July.

If you haven't participated in a state QSO Party during the last 3-4 years, then you are in for a big surprise. The activity in the state QSO party contests has increased over 200% since 2019. In addition, to claimed scores submitted on 3830scores.com, the number of logs submitted to the contest administrator is typically 30% higher than the number of 3830scores.com submissions. As a result, a record number of log submissions for a majority of the state QSO party contests. This level of activity has continued to remain at this high level through 2023. The state QSO party contests have become much more competitive requiring BIC from start-to-finish to take home a WIN!

For those of you who may be new to contesting, the state QSO party is typically a contest in which 'in-state' stations can work everyone and 'out-of-state' stations can only work 'in-state' stations. Each state QSO party contest is unique in its rules, awards and of course the location of the target state.



One additional reason for this consistent high level of entries, is that more operators are participating in multiple state QSO party contests during the year, instead of just participating in their home state QSO party contest.



My story... Being licensed since age 12 in 1975, I've been involved with many different 'on-air' interests of our wonderful hobby. These have included traffic handling/nets, DXing, chasing awards, county hunting and of course, contesting. In 2013, after being a 'mobile only' station for many years, I set-up my low power station (IC-735/low dipoles) and jumped back into contesting. This was the year when I

first experienced the thrill of the state QSO contests. After my first year of QP contesting, I was finishing close to the top and I finally received a 1st Place Award in the 2014 North Carolina QSO Party. I quickly progressed from a player to a contender to a winner!

During 2015, I became actively involved with the administration of the South Carolina QSO Party and led the team through a complete overhaul of the contest with a goal of increasing activity and fun!

In 2019, there were at least 46 active state QSO party contests on-the-air and I was participating in all of them. In November, I conceived an exciting idea that I thought would help tie all of these individual contests together into a year-long competition which would encourage ops to participate in all of the state QSO party contests. My idea was based upon the NASCAR Cup Series concept in which drivers would race each other at various tracks during the season and points would accumulate based on their performance during each race. So basically, each state QSO party was the 'track' and each driver was a 'contester'. Your activity during each contest will determine how you rank at the end of the season.

It was eight weeks before the first state QSO party contest weekend (Vermont, British Columbia and Minnesota) and I was committed to having this new competition up and running by February 2020.

I began sharing my concept with other QSO party testers and I ran across Stan, K4SBZ who developed the Florida Contest Group's club competition. Stan and I started discussing the SQP Cup idea and he joined me in this 'mountain moving' endeavor. Thanks to Stan K4SBZ and the other members of the initial State QSO Party Group (WB9CIF, N2CU, N8II, K3MAW), Bruce WA7BNM and the sponsorship by Icom America, the State QSO Party Challenge year-long competition was now more than an idea... it was a Reality!

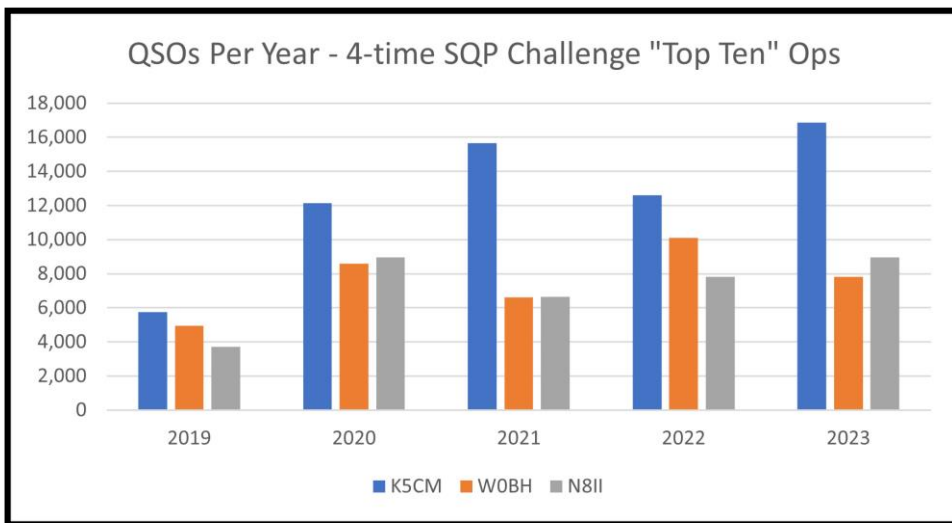
"The purpose of the State QSO party Challenge is to be the catalyst to take state QSO party contesting to the next level."

SQP Challenge Goals:

- To promote increased state QSO party contesting activity.
- To assist state QSO party contest organizers in providing quality contests.
- To increase the enjoyment for QSO party contest participants.

We just completed the fourth year of the State QSO Party Challenge and the interest in the competition has been incredible. Since the SQP Challenge began, there have been more than 4 million claimed QSOs reported in state QSO party contests and the activity has been off-the-charts. State QSO Party administrators have reported record numbers of log submissions and the trend still continues. The chart below illustrates the increase in activity of three individual SQP Challenge 'Top Ten' competitors over the last five years.

To qualify for the State QSO Party awards program, participants must make a minimum of two contacts in two SQP Challenge "approved contests" and submit their activity data to 3830scores.com. Participants can then view their activity via our 'live' Leaderboard located at stateqsoparty.com.



In 2021, we unveiled the "Worked All QSO Parties" award to encourage amateurs to strive to participate in each of the SQP Challenge approved contests.

During 2022, the number of "Challenge Approved" state QSO party contests grew from 45 to 47 with the addition of two Canadian contests, the Quebec QSO Party (VE2) and the Canadian Prairies QSO Party (VE4-5-6).

The mobile/portable state QSO party contesting is the 'life-blood' of the contests. During the last few years, we've noticed more and more POTA operators on the air during the QP season. In 2023, Jim, AD4EB/m and his xyl as a driver, made 12,137 QSOs operating in five state QSO party

contests (FL, GA, IL, TN & TX). In the Florida QSO Party, Jim made 3,404 QSOs from 49 counties in 20 hours!

If you are a POTA or HF mobile operator, please consider getting involved in operating mobile/portable in state QSO party contests in your state and area. The state QSO party contests would love have all of their state counties activated during the contest.

Our current SQP Group consists of WN4AFP, K4SBZ, N8II, WB9CIF and K8ZT. Our primary focus during the last four years has been on keeping the Challenge fresh and exciting. We are always interested in new ideas, suggestions etc. Please visit our website at stateqsoparty.com to contact us.

On behalf of the SQP Challenge Group, I like to thank those of you who have are active participants in the state QSO party contests and to encourage all contesters (Big Guns & Little Pistols) to experience the fun and competition of state QSO party contesting!

Dave Edmonds, WN4AFP
State QSO Party Challenge, Director
stateqsoparty.com



Crank Up the AF Gain?

By Kevan N4XL

As many of us age the youngsters more frequently call us deaf. It isn't limited to young'uns. My wife is 15 years older than I and she thinks I'm deaf too. She admits she's confused though. She sometimes asks 'I know you can hear okay because you hear quiet things like cars approaching long before I do. So why are you asking me what I said?' Bruce MOPUS wrote on the RSGBTechnical Groups.io reflector.

"There is a big difference between being deaf and having difficulty decoding speech. However, the symptoms are so similar that most people will insist that you are deaf because they haven't experienced decoding difficulties and so don't understand that your mishearing could possibly be due to anything other than deafness.

The accepted "cure" for deafness is to turn up the volume, but this rarely improves decoding errors. Being unable to hear correctly in the presence of noise is certainly a

symptom of deafness but noise has an even greater adverse effect on decoding difficulty. I should know because I've had decoding difficulty all my life even though I've had good hearing. Everyone says I'm deaf despite my being able to hear fainter sounds than they can, and despite hearing tests showing that even at 82, I have "the hearing of a man of 53".

When on the air, turning up the volume does not improve matters, particularly in the presence of noise. I use a BHI noise reducer all the time, which DOES make a significant improvement. However, because this also makes an improvement (though lesser) for the deaf, I STILL get labelled as "deaf." You just can't win."

I've been aware for years that improving the S/N ratio of received audio has improved my ability to copy information in contests. Turning up the volume with S5+ band noise to copy a weak signal doesn't work for me. Turning down RF gain makes the wanted signal quieter, but it also reduces the noise making it just a little bit easier for me to separate message from noise. John W4IX taught me that trick.

I've taken over the headphones from dozens of operators while at Field Day sites, other stations, or even from people I've had contesting in my own shack. Very few of them turn down RF gain. Some use attenuation, but most instead turn up the AF gain and blast white noise and QRM into their ears at the same time as their desired signal. I prefer using RF gain over using the Attenuator because it gives me finer control than a fixed amount of attenuation. I used to preach not to use Noise Reduction in contests because it inherently introduces distortion to the signal. But I've since found it often helps me decode better too by reducing the noise more than it distorts the signal.

Another reason to avoid cranking the volume up is that not blasting S5+ noise into your ears hour after hour is less fatiguing and you get more enjoyment from your BIC time.

USB cables and RFI

By Kevan Nason N4XL

Poor USB cable shielding has been mentioned before in our newsletters, but it keeps coming up over and over and over. It turns out that despite having metal at each cable end, not all USB cables have wires connecting the shields of both ends. For those that do, continuous flexing as you connect and disconnect them can break stranded wires causing shield wire resistance to build up over time. The N1MMLoggerPlus Groups.io reflector has a thread starting with post #82248 titled "open question about RFI & USB". Some interesting excerpts:

Mike VE9AA: I Why do so many people vehemently refuse to believe they have an RFI problem (especially when it comes to USB ports?)

I bet I have posted a dozen times over the years how I was able to solve mine and I think I have only had one guy use my advice and then write me privately to tell me it solved his issue. Everyone wants to put on mix #31 toroids but sometimes that's not enough...especially with today's proliferation of plastic (ie: unshielded) devices.

Sometimes even moving a cable in your shack 2" (5cm) can make RFI rear its ugly head. (yes, it's true)

In my own case I bonded the outer shield of the USB port(plastic laptop) to my station ground and 99% of my RFI issues went away. I even had RFI down to a mere 5w on 15m (300w on 80m) which would knock out rig control or sometimes the WinkeyerUSB.

Randy N7CKJ: A very good question and I will add that many other hams seemingly refuse to realize that SWR can change with the weather and cause RFI problems where none existed, before.

Mike NE8P: An additional thing to note: ANY USB cable connected to the N1MM/rig control computer can sabotage things. I'd ferrited everything but a printer cable and would still occasionally have issues. With that cable disconnected from the computer, all is well.

Bill N0AC: I echo Mike's, VE9AA, comments on grounding the USB cables. After his suggestion I soldered a small wire to the Type C end and grounded it in my mobile station. I had been plagued with RFI rebooting my laptop to the "Windows Blue Screen of Death". No more problems. I also had problems in the same environment with the charging cable to the laptop. A grounded plug was the fix.

Steve N2IC: There are a lot of crappy USB cables out there, and they get crappier with use as the strands break. Measure the shield continuity from end-to-end. If it's more than about 1.5 ohms, throw it away.

Pete N4ZR: "Can anyone recommend a particular USB cable with good shielding?" The only cable mentioned by several responders to Pete's question was Tripplite with built in ferrites. Mike NE8P wrote "Yes, Tripp Lite, but I still need ferrites.

<https://tripplite.eaton.com/usb-2-0-high-speed-a-b-cable-ferrite-chokes-male-6-ft~U023006> "

Janez S51J provided a link to a website describing actual measurement of USB cable shielding. Jim K9YC is a respected authority on RFI mitigation and station bonding. Jim commented on the provided link by saying "YES! Documents the sort of junk products it's easy to buy online." <https://www.voctopuce.com/EN/article/usb-cables-shielding-matters-as-well>

Excerpts from "The Missing Q Signals"

Original By John Queen, KA0ESY & Mike Colyar, K7ITL. Additions by Thom LaCosta K3HRM and members of QRP-L. Contributed to SFCG by Kevan Nason N4XL

QAS - I am speaking out of my a#%

QBA - My antenna is BIG!

QBO - Don't sit next to that guy in the meeting.

QBS - It's getting deep in here.

Alternate suggested by ken cubilo w8ob

QBS - Clean the bird sh*t off your antenna so you can hear me
QCP - I am using Cat Power(From Rotary Cat Power Wheel)
Suggestions made for spark gap transmitter on QRP-L mailing list
QCW - I am going to whistle Morse Code on FM (or SSB)
QDR – Dam* Right the frequency is busy! (In response to QRL)
Contributed by Don Melcher = W6ZO
QET - Phone home.
QET? - Has anyone called me from another planet?
QEW - Copy is difficult due to Ear Wax.
Contributed by John L Sielke W2AGN
QFH - This frequency is MINE! - go elsewhere.
QFH? - Is this frequency hogged?
QHI - I am jumping in quick to say hi, then going QRT.
QHI? - Are you leaving after only one transmission?
QKB? - How many knobs does your radio have?
QKB n - My radio has "n" knobs.
Contributed by Fred K6DGW
QKN? - How many of them do you know how to use?
QKN n - I think I know how to use "n" of them.
Contributed by Fred K6DGW
QLF - I am sending with my left foot.
QLF? - Are you sending with your left foot?
QLK - I am sending with my left foot and keyboard.
Contributed by Thom LaCosta K3HRN
QNO? - Are you sending through a non-standard orifice?
Contributed by Thom LaCosta K3HRN
QOF Yes, I am an Old Fart.
QOF? Are you an old Fart?
Contributed by Jim W7RY
QOK - Your last transmission was Okie Dokie.
QRC - Warning, rag chewer on frequency.
QRW - Means Qrp - Really Weak
contributed by w0rw
QWC? - Who cares? } Courtesy of
QWC - I have to go to the bathroom } Courtesy of Fred Bonavita, K5QLF
QZZ? - Is that a 60Hz hum, or are you snoring?

Observations by the Editor:

- People often wonder which cluster to use for spots. VE7CC has an advantage that some may find useful. Lee VE7CC wrote “The VE7CC-1 cluster is the only cluster I know of that carries PSKReporter spots”. Also in that thread was talk about two CC Cluster commands that do not

appear in many online CC Cluster command lists. Those two are SET/FT8 SET/NoFT8. CC Cluster Command list is available at https://bcdxc.org/ve7cc/ccc/CCC_Commands.htm

When I logged onto the VE7CC Cluster the following appeared when I connected. Maybe they will be useful:

set/skimmer turns on Skimmer spots.
set/noskimmer turns off Skimmer spots.

set/noft8 turns off FT8 spots.
set/ft8 turns on FT8 spots.

set/noft8 turns off FT8 spots.
set/ft4 turns on FT4 spots.

set/own turns on all spots for own call.
unset/own turns off spots for own call.

set/nobeacon turns off spots for beacons.
set/beacon turns them back on.

- Maybe only particular to a K4, but RTTY ops having trouble with FSK using 2Tone may find this comment by Bob N6TV useful, "You're better off using AFSK with 2Tone."
- If you use the Windows operating system, you WILL eventually have problems with it messing with your audio connections. Joe W4TV is a microHAM expert and has answered questions about audio related issues for over a decade. Joe often recommends a Restart, not a Reboot, be used to fix computer problems. He says to Restart because it flushes out many of the temporary settings that cause problems. When you do a Reboot (which is a normal shutdown and then restart it), Windows stores many settings and reloads them again at start up. By Rebooting you might just be reloading the things that are causing your problem. However, in post #21695 of the microHAM Groups.io reflector he wrote:

A *cold boot* (restart not reboot) of Windows will force re-enumerating of USB devices. Since the bet procedure for updating Router involves a restart, that probably precipitated Windows' own repair.

My procedure when trying to fix audio issues was always:

- 1) disconnect the USB cables
- 2) start Device Manager and select View -> show Hidden Devices
- 3) Expand Sound, video and game controllers
delete all gray devices
- 4) Expand Ports (COM & LPT)
delete all gray devices
- 5) Expand Universal Serial Bus controllers
delete all gray devices

- 6) Delete all (!) devices
- 7) RESTART Windows
- 8) connect USB cables one at a time

That cleans out the dreck from Windows and causes all devices to be re-enumerated. It has always worked for me (and I've had a lot of odd devices connected/disconnected over the years).

73,
... Joe, W4TV

- The December 20, 2023 ARRL Contest Update had this tip:
“We've traced the RFI! It's coming from inside the house! Have you checked your noise floor lately? RF interference can be horrific and negatively affect your contest scores. Performing a periodic noise audit can help you stay on top of things. Power a receiver from a noiseless source such as a battery and turn everything else off in your location at your circuit-breaker panel. Note the noise levels on each band, then turn everything on again. If you detect a difference, it could be time to do a thorough search for the offending radiator. Start by turning off each breaker again until the noise abates -- that's the circuit that has the device-making noise. Usually it's a switching power supply, but unusual sources have included arcing filaments inside incandescent or halogen bulbs, marginal or defective fluorescent bulbs or ballasts, arcing thermostats, space heaters, LED lights, wall dimmers, variable-frequency drives on furnace or A/C motors, damaged underground feeders to outbuildings, and marginal connections where arcing is occurring.”

N1MM+ Tips:

NOTE: Unless otherwise specified references to problems people are having, solutions, and tips come from the N1MMLoggerPlus Group.io reflector. A search there for items described should turn up the original posts and replies.

- If you missed it above in the Observations by the Editor section, Joe W4TV explains how he has managed to solve many of his recurring Windows audio path issues.
- Reporting your score to the online scoreboards is becoming common. N1MM can report your score to two different scoreboards. It is recommended you use “score distributor server” since it will report to both. It turns out that at least one scoreboard, and maybe both, don't require login passwords if N1MM's score distributor server is used. During that thread a concern was brought up that the Username and Password strings were not encrypted and could be stolen. The reply to why people should care about someone stealing a contest score reporting password is interesting. People often use the same password for multiple applications so gaining access to something trivial can in fact have more serious implications. Some can lead to direct access to your bank account. Others are

less obvious. A ham answered he had led a team of about 25 people in repairing a hack of a major utility company that cost \$25 million to mitigate, the cost of which was of course passed on to its customers. The root cause of that hack turned out to be a company employee used the same password for both the utility company's software and posts they made to a public platform about their barbeque hobby. While targeting the company, hackers noticed the employee made frequent posts about BBQ and were able to steal his password from there. They then accessed the employee's home computer and installed malicious software on it. Since the employee accessed the utility company's software from home the hackers could now penetrate the company's firewall. And since the employee used the same password for both company and personal use the hackers now had a tunnel to the utility company software systems. The N1MM Development Team asked for a secure code string for Usernames and Passwords that could be used with the online scoreboards. Since they aren't needed anyway, the decision was made to instead just remove the Username and Password fields from N1MM.

- Cluster and {SPOTME} self-spotting macro tidbits
 - The N1MM Design Team put a 10 minute timer into the program so that even if you use {SPOTME} every 5 seconds it won't be sent to your cluster unless it has been 10 minutes since your last self-spot. This cuts down on cluster and RBN loading.
 - Some like to put {SPOTME} into their F3 string so it is automatically sent at the end of every Q. Tim N3QE writes: "It is not necessary to have {spotme} in F3. If you are running a pileup without F1 CQ'ing, you don't need a self-spot. "Save" the once-per-10-minute self-spot for when you have no callers and hit F1."
 - Tim N3QE also wrote: "There is a weird interaction between some Telnet clusters and the "once per 10 minute" N1MM rule. Many Telnet clusters (especially VE7CC's node) have their own timer for deduplicating self-spots that turns out to result in "once per 20 minutes". "
 - Some say you don't need to use {SPOTME} in CW, RTTY, and FT4/8 contests since the RBN automatically picks up your CQ and automatically spots you. Tim wrote: "Jim, there is still value in self-spotting (where allowed as in ARRL contests) in CW and RTTY. Only a tiny fraction of Telnet cluster nodes incorporate skimmer reversebeacon spots. You and me and most people on this list are avid contesters and we've found a couple good nodes with skimmer spots turned on. But the average occasional contesteer is not in-the-know, and is likely either using a node that has no reversebeacon skimmer spots, or if it has them they may not be enabled."
 - Rudy N2WQ contributed to the thread with:

This is so true! There is a fair amount of resistance to implementing RBN feeds into Telnet nodes. Even worse, there is a great deal of pride running nodes on

equipment that is not meant for 24 x 7 x 365 operation or support for a large number of users.

I got fed up and launched my own cluster, running on AWS with virtually unlimited ability to scale and availability determined by the reliability of the CC Cluster software.

Also, don't assume all clusters support self spotting; many don't. My cluster does, but this discussion reminds me that I wanted to find out what the time interval in CC Cluster is.

There is more to clusters- while it is true that spots make their way to all clusters, it is not true that this happens all at once. I established 40+ peer connections with other clusters and noticed that spots often arrive with significant delays (eg 15-30 sec). For a Type A personality contester the ability to be one of the first stations to work a mult is important.

Commented [KN1]:

Upcoming Contests:

See the WA7BNM webpages <https://www.contestcalendar.com/contestcal.html>

SFOTA Current Leaderboard:

Jan-16-2024

Current Leaderboard

2024 OVERALL STANDINGS

CALL	Contests	CW QSO'S	SSB QSO'S	DIGITAL QSO'S	RTTY QSO'S	TOTAL QSO'S
1) N4IQ	10	1831	0	0	1327	3158
2) WB4HRL	11	978	20	0	677	1675
3) K2SX	4	1359	0	0	0	1359
4) WN4AFP	12	1123	7	0	0	1130
5) N4XL	1	951	0	0	0	951
6) KG4IGC	2	304	0	0	465	769
7) KE4EA	8	642	0	0	0	642
8) KZ3P	4	0	156	0	446	602
9) K4QQG	2	0	308	0	225	533
10) AA4SD	3	414	0	0	0	414
11) K7OM	2	155	0	0	183	338
12) K4FT	2	321	0	0	0	321
13) NI7R	1	315	0	0	0	315
14) KS4YX	2	176	0	0	102	278
15) N1UZ	2	66	0	0	209	275
16) KD4S	2	114	0	0	106	220
17) N4QI	2	195	0	0	0	195
18) N2OG	1	106	0	0	0	106

2024 INDIVIDUAL MODE STANDINGS

CALL	CW QSO'S	CALL	SSB QSO'S	CALL	DIGITAL QSO'S	CALL	RTTY QSO'S
N4IQ	1831	K4QQG	308	N4IQ		N4IQ	1327
K2SX	1359	KZ3P	156	WB4HRL		WB4HRL	677
WN4AFP	1123	WB4HRL	20	KG4IGC		KG4IGC	465
WB4HRL	978	WN4AFP	7	KZ3P		KZ3P	446
N4XL	951			K4QQG		K4QQG	225
KE4EA	642			N1UZ		N1UZ	209
AA4SD	414			K7OM		K7OM	183
K4FT	321			KD4S		KD4S	106
NI7R	315			KS4YX		KS4YX	102
KG4IGC	304						
N4QI	195						
KS4YX	176						
K7OM	155						
KD4S	114						
N2OG	106						
N1UZ	66						

3830 Activity:

We haven't said in a couple years, but we decided to not post the regular weekly events like CWT's to minimize space.

Contest	Call	Class	Power	Score
9A DX				
12/17/23	K4FT	SOAB	LP	9,225
12/17/23	NN4SS	SOAB	HP	13,224
12/18/23	WN4AFP	SO Mixed	LP	18,630
ARRL 160				
12/18/23	NN4SS	Single Op	HP	39,772
NAQP CW January				
01/14/24	AA4SD	Single Op	QRP	39,680
01/14/24	K2SX	Single Op Assisted	LP	257,706
01/14/24	K3DNE	Single Op Assisted	LP	75,764
01/14/24	K4FT	Single Op Assisted	LP	23,000
01/15/24	K7OM	Single Op Assisted	LP	12,710
01/14/24	KD4S	Single Op Assisted	LP	10,032
01/14/24	KE4EA	Single Op Assisted	LP	52,490
01/14/24	KG4IGC	Single Op Assisted	LP	51,680
01/15/24	KY4ID	Single Op Assisted	LP	217,764
01/14/24	KZ3P	Single Op Assisted	LP	3,185
01/14/24	N1UZ	Single Op	LP	2,442
01/15/24	N2OG	Single Op	LP	7,738
01/14/24	N4IQ	Single Op Assisted	LP	219,114
01/14/24	N4QI	Single Op Assisted	LP	13,855
01/14/24	N4XL	Single Op Assisted	LP	284,349

Contest	Call	Class	Power	Score
01/14/24	NI7R	Single Op Assisted	LP	45,990
01/14/24	NN4SS	Single Op	LP	24,521
01/14/24	WB4HRL	Single Op Assisted	LP	63,200
01/14/24	WN4AFP	Single Op Assisted	LP	92,640
OK RTTY				
12/17/23	K7OM	SOAB	HP	3,108
12/17/23	KG4IGC	SOAB	LP	58,240
RAC Winter				
12/31/23	AA4SD	Single Op CW	QRP	2,900
12/31/23	K4QQG	Single Op Assisted	HP	92,720
12/31/23	KZ3P	Single Op Phone	HP	32,184
12/31/23	WB4HRL	Single Op Assisted	HP	19,740
01/02/24	WN4AFP	Single Op Assisted	LP	17,992
RTTY Roundup				
01/08/24	K4QQG	SO Unlimited Limited	HP	15,525
01/11/24	K7OM	Single Op	HP	11,895
01/08/24	KD4S	SO Unlimited Limited	HP	7,208
01/10/24	KG4IGC	Single Op	LP	46,965
01/08/24	KZ3P	SO Unlimited	LP	34,276
01/08/24	N1UZ	Single Op	LP	14,421
01/08/24	N4IQ	SO Unlimited Limited	HP	163,221
01/08/24	N4VZ	Single Op	LP	25,481
01/08/24	WB4HRL	SO Unlimited Limited	HP	55,514
TBDC Dec 30				
12/31/23	KD4S	Single Op	HP	248
12/31/23	W4GE	Single Op	LP	564

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73 es QRT de N4XL